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MY LADY OF DOUBT

BY RANDALL PARRISH

Author of "Love Under Fire," "My Lady of the Northside"

Illustrations by HENRY THURDE

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Major Lawrence, son of Judge Lawrence of Virginia, whose wife was a Lee, is sent on a reconnaissance mission by Gen. Washington, just after the winter at Valley Forge.

CHAPTER II—Disguised in a British uniform arrives within the enemy's lines.

CHAPTER III—The Major attends a great feast and saves the "Lady of the Blended Rose" from mob. He later meets the girl at a brilliant ball.

CHAPTER IV—Trouble is started over a walk, and Lawrence is urged by his partner, Miss Mortimer, (the Lady of the Blended Rose), to make his escape.

CHAPTER V—Lawrence is detected as a spy by Captain Grant of the British Army, who agrees to a duel.

CHAPTER VI—The duel is stopped by Grant's friends and the spy makes a dash for liberty, swimming a river following a narrow escape.

CHAPTER VII—The Major arrives at the shop of a blacksmith, who is friendly and knows the Lady of the Blended Rose.

CHAPTER VIII—Captain Grant and rangers arrive and search the blacksmith shop in vain for the spy.

CHAPTER IX—Lawrence joins the militia men who capture Grant and his train.

CHAPTER X—Major Lawrence is made prisoner by an Indian and two white men.

CHAPTER XI—Lawrence's captors lock him in a strong cell, where he meets Peter the jailer.

CHAPTER XII—Peter advises Lawrence not to attempt escape as "some one" will send for him.

CHAPTER XIII—Grant's appearance adds mystery to the combination of circumstances.

CHAPTER XIV—Lawrence again meets the Lady of the Blended Rose, who informs him that he is in her house and that she was in command of the party that attacked and captured him.

CHAPTER XV—The captive is thrust into a dark underground chamber when Captain Grant begins a search of the premises.

CHAPTER XVI—After digging his way out, Lawrence finds the place deserted. Evidence of a battle and a dead man across the threshold.

CHAPTER XVII—Col. Mortimer, father of the Lady of the Blended Rose, finds his home in ruins.

CHAPTER XVIII—Capt. Grant insists that Lawrence be strung up at once.

CHAPTER XIX—Miss Mortimer appears, explains the mystery and Lawrence is held a prisoner of war, and is again locked in the strong room.

CHAPTER XX—Lawrence escapes through a plan arranged by The Lady and sees Grant attack Miss Mortimer.

"Now, man, speak quick; you were given some word for me? Some instructions how I was to get away?"

"Sure; but ye drew those cords tight! You are to go upstairs, out the front door, and turn to the right; there's a horse in the thicket beyond the summer house. Damnation, loosen that ankle rope, will ye?"

I gave it a twitch, but felt little compassion for the fellow, and ran up the steps, leaving the lantern below. I knew the way even in the dark, and experienced little trouble in feeling my passage. I met with no interference, and heard no sound, the house seemingly deserted. Only as I opened the front door could I hear distant, irregular firing to the northwest. Assured that no guard remained, I flung myself recklessly over the porch rail onto the smooth turf of the lawn. The dim outlines of the latticed summer house could be discerned not thirty feet distant, and I started toward it unhesitatingly. I had made half the distance when a horse neighed suddenly to my right, and, startled at the sound, I fell flat, creeping cautiously forward into the shadow of a low bush. I had risen to my knees, believing the animal must be the one left there for my use, when I heard the growl of a voice, a man's voice, from out the summer house.

An instant I could not locate the sound nor distinguish it clearly; then a sentence cut the air so distinctly that I recognized the speaker. Grant! What was he doing here? Had we delayed too long? Had Fagin's pursuers returned? If so, why was he there in the summer house, and with whom was he conversing? I crouched back listening, afraid to move.

"I saw the gleam of your white skirt as I rounded the house," he exclaimed. "By Gad, I thought the horse was going to bolt with me. Fine bit of luck this, finding you out here alone. What's going on out yonder?"

"There was an attack on the horse guard, and Mr. Seldon is in pursuit. But how does it happen you have returned alone? Has anything occurred to my father?"

I judged from the sound that he seated himself before answering, and there was a hesitancy sufficiently noticeable, so as to cause the girl to ask anxiously:

"He has not been injured?"

"Who, the colonel?" with a short laugh. "No fear of that while pursuing those fellows; they ride too fast, and are scattered by now all the way from here to the Atlantic. Probably a squad of the same gang out there fighting Seldon. Trouble with the colonel is he takes the affair too seriously; imagines he is actually on the trail, and proposes to remain out all night. I became tired of such foolish-

ness and rode back."

"You mean you left? Deserted?"

"Oh, hardly that," lazily. "You see I was sent out with a detachment to ride down the Lewistown road. I merely left my sergeant in command and turned my horse's head this way. I can be back by morning, and I wanted to see you."

"To see me, Captain Grant! You disobeyed my father's orders to ride back and see me? I hardly appreciate the honor."

"Oh, I suppose not," his tone grown suddenly bitter. "But I am here just the same, and propose carrying out my intention. What do you think I am made of—wood? You treat me as though I possessed no feelings to be hurt. See here, Claire, don't draw away from me like that. What has got into you lately? You have led me a merry chase all winter in Philadelphia, but now you have even dared to flout me to my face, and in the presence of your father. Do you suppose I am the kind to stand for that? What is the matter, girl? Who has come between us? Is it that rascally rebel? No; you stay where you are, and answer me. That is what I came back alone for, to find out."

She was upon her feet, and I could even see her hand clasping a lattice of the summer house.

"Why do you ask this? What right have you? There was never a promise between us."

"The understanding has existed for ten years; never denied until now," he protested hotly. "You knew I loved you; I've fought a dozen men on your account."

"True enough," she broke in, "you have challenged every gentleman who has dared address me. Did you think such swashbuckling was going to win my heart? Any girl possessing self-respect would revolt at such methods. Whatever affection I may have felt for you as a boy has been driven from me by these actions. You wanted a slave, a servant, not a companion, and it is not in Mortimer blood to yield to every whim, to every crack of the whip. I never loved you, never confessed I did. I tried to be obedient, endeavored to like you to please my father, but this past winter has so thoroughly revealed your real character that I will pretend no longer."

"My character! We have known each other from childhood. I know well enough what has made the difference in you."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed; it's that damned Continental spy."

"It has been some one all along, according to your theory—any gentleman who has shown me ordinary kindness. You have called out Captain Kincaid, Lieutenant Mathieson, Major Lang, and others, just to prove your ownership of me. You have made me the laughing stock of Philadelphia. Now it pleases you to select Major Lawrence with whom to associate my name. Because he dined with me once you feel justified in quarreling with him in my presence, in goading him into fighting you. It was the act of a cowardly bully. Whatever respect I may once have had for you, Captain Grant, has been dissipated this past winter."

"Can you tell me it is not Lawrence?"

"I could tell you, and very plainly, but I refuse to be questioned."

"Well, by Gad! I know without asking," and he sprang to his feet, gripping her hand. "You've helped that fellow against me from the first. I'll put up with it no longer. I came back here tonight desperate, prepared to resort to any measures. I meant to give you a chance, and, by heaven! I have. Do you think I am the sort of

man you can play with? If I can have you only by force then it is going to be that. Oh, don't try to pull away! I've got you now just as I wanted you—alone! Your father is not here, and that fool Seldon is busy enough out yonder. There is not even a guard to interfere. Do you know what I mean to do?"

She made no answer, but her silence seemed to fan his anger.

"Sulky, are you? Well, I'll tell you just the same. There's a preacher living at the crossroads—you know him, that snivelling, long-faced Jenks. He's a ranting rebel all right, but he'll do what I say, or I'll cut his heart out. You are going there with me tonight to be married. I'll put an end to these tantrums, and by tomorrow you'll have come to your senses. Now will you go quietly, or shall I make you?"

She wrenched away from him; and there was a moment's struggle, and then her white-robed figure sprang forth into the starlight. I saw him grasp her, tearing the shoulder of her dress with the fierce grip of his fingers. I was already upon my feet, crouched behind the bush, prepared to spring. She drew back, her face white as marble.

"You coward! You cur!"

"Hold your temper, mistress," with a snarling laugh. "I know how to conquer you."

That moment I reached him.

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man you can play with? If I can have you only by force then it is going to be that. Oh, don't try to pull away! I've got you now just as I wanted you—alone! Your father is not here, and that fool Seldon is busy enough out yonder. There is not even a guard to interfere. Do you know what I mean to do?"

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CHAPTER XXI.

Words of Love.

In spite of the fact that he was armed the advantage was all with me. His grip on the girl dragged her to the ground with him, but she rolled aside as we grappled like two wild beasts, my fingers at his throat. I knew the strength of the man, but my first blow had sent his brain reeling, while the surprise of my unexpected assault gave me the grip sought. He struggled to one knee, wrenching his arms free, but went down again as my fist cracked against his jaw. Then it was arm to arm, muscle to muscle, every sinew strained as we clung to each other, striving for mastery. He fought like a fiend, roaring and snapping to make me break my hold, but I only clung the closer, twisting one hand free and driving my fist into his face. As last I gripped his pistol, wrenched it forth, and struck with the butt. He sank back, limp and breathless, and I rose to my knees looking down into the upturned face. Almost at the moment her hand touched my shoulder.

"Is he dead? Have you killed him?"

"Far from it," I answered gladly. "He is merely stunned, and will revive presently, but with a sad headache. I would not have hit him, but he is a stronger man than I."

"Oh, you were justified. It was done to protect me. I knew you must be somewhere near."

"You were waiting for me?"

"Yes—no; not exactly that. I was in the summer house; I did not mean you should see me, but I wished to be sure of your escape; I—I—of course I was anxious."

"I can easily understand that, for you have assumed much risk—even ventured the life of the devoted Peter."

"Oh, no; you rate my devotion too high by far. Peter's life has not been endangered."

"But the guard told me he was the direct cause of all that firing beyond the ravine."

The starlight revealed the swift merriment in her eyes.

"I—I—well, I believe he was orig-

REAL ESTATE BARGAINS.

No. 80. One lot 75x150 in Southern Heights, with privilege of additional ground if wanted. Small barn on lot. Walks, light and water at front of property.

No. 81. Two residences on lot 100 by 180. One 10-room house, one 4-room house. Located on Troy avenue. Well improved and in good neighborhood. Small house rents at \$8 and large at \$15.

No. 82. Nice 8-room residence, bath, etc. Located on corner lot. About three blocks from business section. Lot 66x99.

No. 83. Nice corner lot in Henry Addition. Large enough for two houses, or one house and good garden. Located near northern extremity of the addition.

No. 84. Residence of 8 rooms located in heart of business section. Fine location for business man. \$2600 cash will swing deal.

No. 85. 1250 acres cut over timber land in Cash river bottom; does not overflow, fine soil and fine body of land. Would make dandy farm when cleared. Two miles from railroad; 15 miles from Jonesboro, Ark. Will sell all or part of tract for half cash on long time payments. Price per acre \$15. Easily worth \$50 when cleared.

No. 86. Farm of 93 acres, 50 in cultivation, rest timber. All high, dry bottom land, under wire fence, good 4-room house, large barn, two wells, small orchard, soil dark loam. Farm will produce fine corn, cotton, hay, fruits, etc. Quarter mile from railroad station. Price \$45 with terms if wanted. Near Jonesboro, Ark.

No. 87. Forty acre farm, 35 acres in cultivation; 10 acres bottom, balance ridge. Good 3-room house, barn, good water, on 2 public roads, fine land. Near school and half mile to railroad station, 5 miles from Jonesboro. Fine fruit and poultry farm; also cotton and corn, etc. Price \$27.50 an acre; terms if wanted.

No. 88. Four lots, each 50x150 feet, on good level ground in Southern Heights. Broad street in front, concrete walks on both sides, water-mains and sewer already in. Will sell one or more lots to suit purchaser. This property comes under special restrictions—no negroes no surface closets, no residence to cost less than \$1,000. Best residence section in Hickman, with no city taxes. This addition was opened last year and eight new houses have gone up; others will go up this spring.

No. 89. Nice 6 room residence, almost new, lot 60x150, outbuildings, city water, etc., located in southeast part of town in splendid neighborhood, and close to Hickman College. Place will bear close inspection. For \$1600 you can get a deed to this pretty little house.

No. 90. The Dr. H. E. Prather home, located in one of the best neighborhoods in the city, with magnificent river view. House contains seven rooms, city water, electric lights, outbuildings, etc., with big, roomy lot. A very desirable place for a home for any business man. \$2600 will buy it; easy terms.

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In Spite of the Fact That He Was Armed, the Advantage Was All With Me.

(Continued on another page.)